

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

2003

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10/27/54 at
21 October 1954 6-1714

DD/P 1-2994

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: British "White Paper" on Guatemala.

1. Attached hereto, pursuant to your request of this morning, is a copy of the British Foreign Office "Report on Events leading up to and arising out of the Change of Regime in Guatemala, 1954" -- which was prepared by the Foreign Office for presentation to the British Parliament as the result of an undertaking given at the time of the Parliamentary debates of June and July.

2. The principal feature of this White Paper is the opening document, viz. the dispatch which begins on Page 1, from the British Minister in Guatemala to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, dated July 26, 1954. This is a most admirable version of the entire series of developments in Guatemala and coming at the beginning of the paper, as it does, provides a frame of reference and sets the tone for all of the balance of the correspondence and debates which follow. The rest of the documentation is a rather tedious and dreary compilation of the records of proceedings of the United Nations Security Council, etc., all of which were previously a matter of public record -- and thus neither add to nor subtract from the information publicly available on the subject.

3. For your own information, we have the British Embassy here, and particularly Messrs [] to thank for the handling of this matter. You will recall that we were quite concerned about what might appear in the White Paper and had numerous discussions with the Embassy about this matter. We also furnished a certain amount of information to the Embassy which was in turn passed on to the Foreign Office. It is by no means beyond the realm of possibility that the opening dispatch of July 26 was influenced by these efforts and that the general form, if not the content, was suggested to the British Minister in Guatemala by the Foreign Office.

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FRANK G. WISNER
Deputy Director (Plans)

Attachment:
British White Paper on
Guatemala, as described.

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21 October 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT: Report on Events leading up to and arising out of
the Change of Regime in Guatemala, 1954

The report of Her Majesty's Minister at Guatemala to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs dated July 26, 1954, is a paper which I believe anyone who followed the events in Guatemala should be proud to have composed. It is at the same time a clear statement of fact and a positive statement of British position with regard to the change of government in Guatemala. So clear is that latter point that one wonders whether this report was prepared in the routine manner. So obvious is its intent that it would seem that the first hand that dipped the quill was some leagues from Guatemala City. Nonetheless, it is obvious that the composer of this piece addressed himself to his assignment with a right goodwill and perhaps enthusiasm -- both of which qualities we have inferred were lacking in some earlier British approaches to this subject.

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